Deke,

        Im not sure what good this will do if any but this will give you a brief explanation of my involvement in all of this. I'll try to explain how I got started and how I eventually stopped "obviously a bit too late".

The company that I have worked at for the last 10 years is a machine shop. When I first started here they needed a new programmer. When I say programmer, I mean cad/cam. Cad, which is computer aided drafting, and Cam which is computer aided manufacturing. I draw up and design parts on a computer and then move them into a Cam system to add cutter/tool path to them to manufacture airplane parts out of raw material. This is usually a trade that requires some schooling or college training in Computer aided drafting. I've never really had the means to be able to afford schooling like this and that is where all of this began.

Back in about 1996 I was looking for a way to be able to take our cad system home with me to be able to learn it without costing my company a fortune while they waited for me to try to figure it out on my own. Our cad system "Cimatron" has "NO" local support meaning that if I wanted to take classes on it I would have had to fly out to Toronto Canada for a week and pay a fortune for the trip plus the schooling. I couldn't afford to do this on my own and my job couldn't really afford for me to take the time off at the time regardless. I heard about a company in Canada that sold hasp emulators "hasp is the protection for our cad system" and heard that it was totally legal to use these "im not so sure now". Right away I ordered the hasp emulator and started bringing the cad system home and learning. I found out in a hurry that Cimatron changed their protection fairly often which meant that the hasp emulator only worked for a short period and then you would have to pay for another one. Someone that I knew at the time locally told me that sometimes on Usenet "Internet news groups" you could find software like my cad system free to download. I started looking on Usenet and sure enough I ran across a copy and downloaded it. Keep at mind at this time I had just started using computers and had never heard of software piracy. I noticed that sometimes it was hard to come across all of the files on Usenet but did notice that the files had an information file in them that had an email address to contact and an IRC channel on something called efnet which was an IRC server. I had never heard of IRC at this time and started to try to figure out how to get on and use it. Worst mistake of my life up to this point.

I dont know if you know much about IRC "Internet relay chat" but its actually totally legal and is a public means of getting into real time chat channels of all sorts. It ranges anywhere from adult chat to hobbies to of course warez groups. Once on irc it didn't take long. There was a group called LND which I had no idea at this point that warez groups even existed or what they even were. This was some time in about 1997. I found a cad channel called #cad_warez "at this point had no idea what the warez part of the title meant" and went in and started to talk to people. Once one of the group members in the channel learned that I used Cimatron for a living it didn't take long. They started to ask me how good I was with he software and if they were to give me one of these "hasp emulators" if I would test it for them to see if it worked and in return they would just let me have the hasp emulator for free. I thought I had hit the jack pot. At this time the only two warez group members I knew were a guy named GRAD and Nightsky "The were the leaders of the group called LND". They held true to their word and every time a new version of Cimatron came out they would ask me to test it for them. I had no idea where they got the software at this point I only knew that this was a good way for me to be able to have my cad system at home.

This went on for about a year when eventually GRAD invited me into a different irc channel. It was so long ago that I don't even remember the name of it and don't think it even exists anymore. Inside of this irc channel were a bunch of people that belonged to this group LND. That was when GRAD told me that if I agreed to test Cimatron for him any time he needed that he would give me access to an ftp server so that I could easily download cimatron if I needed it (the problem was, they were getting cimatron long before I was getting it as a customer and they wanted me to

have a way to download it so I could test it immediately) but on this server were
1000's of other software titles that were available for download. I couldn"t
believe it. I had never seen anything like it before. Obviously I got curious and
started to ask questions. That was when I started to learn how the whole warez
scene worked. At this point I started to get an idea that this couldn't be legal
but still had never heard of anyone getting in trouble for this and when I asked
GRAD if they were selling this software he said no and that it was totally 100% fun,
free, and non profit. They even had a disclaimer in their information files that
stated This is 100% non profit. If you download and use this software and like it
then buy it".

As a couple of years went by I sat in their irc channel and watched people talk and
was easily able to pick up on how things worked. By now it is about 1999. In that
past couple of years GRAD and Nightsky found out that my company was not only
licensed for Cimatron but gibbs also. Now they were asking me to test both of these
software titles for them and I did still thinking everything was ok. LND since the
day I entered the channel was a very small group of people. There were only about
10 people at the most that I ever saw at one time so it was easy to get to know
everyone and talk to them. At about this time is when they started to ask me to
supply to them the two cad systems "meaning upload them to their servers for
cracking". I told them that I didn't have a problem with it since most of the
updates were available for download from both Cimatrons and Gibbs website to the
general public anyway and if you went to Cimatron user meetings which they held all
over the country they would hand out their cd's to anyone. My need to supply we
found out in the future was almost worthless since they were able to get cimatron
from people in Europe allot faster since they seemed to get the newer versions
released to them sooner than to me and by now there were so many people willing to
supply Gibbs since it was just an easy download off of Gibbs website. While I told
them I didn't have a problem with supplying them with the software, this was
actually the first time I had felt uncomfortable about being associated with that
whole warez scene. By this time I had been there long enough to realize that this
was not legal but still had no idea to what extent. About this time also, LND had
started to make changes and fall apart. Allot of members were quitting and the
group only had about 5 people left. About this time, they started to have allot of
their software titles cracked by other groups as they only had one person in their
group that could crack. When you test the cracked software "which is what I was
doing with cimatron and gibbs" you have to work closely with the crackers in order
to let them know what functions they missed of if things weren't working properly.
Now since LND was having software cracked by other groups I started to get to know
more and more people.

Some time in the year 2000 all of the sudden I heard my first case of someone
getting busted for software piracy. It was a group called PWA "Pirates with
Attitude" At this time I talked to grad and nightsky and told them I had enough.
Once people were getting busted I didn't want any part of what was going on. They
told me that it was ok and that the only reason that PWA members were getting busted
was because they were caught selling software and that since we were still 100% non
profit there would be no trouble. At this time LND was really doing bad. GRAD was
around less and less and Nightsky was starting to work so he wasn't around much and
the group really started to go down. They hung on from 2000 until right around the
end of 2001 when all of the sudden I noticed there was another group that got busted
for software piracy called DOD.   Right before DOD got busted Nightsky decided he
had enough and was ready to go on his way and said he was going to start looking for
someone else to lead the group. At that time me and a guy from Sweden called Raams
did what we could to work for the crackers that were cracking LND's software and get
it tested. The only titles I had tested up to this point and anytime after were
Cimatron and Gibbs. Since LND cracked mostly professional software you had to have
experience in what you were testing to even understand it most of the time. After
the DOD bust I decided that I had definitely had enough. Raams and I stuck around
long enough for Nightsky to find a new leader "a guy named GZA" who was the leader
of Rise at the time. Nightsky asked me to talk to GZA since I had talked to him
allot in the past and see if he would be willing to take the group over. He agreed.
 GZA only took the group over long enough to get someone else to start leading it.

This was as far as I know the last and current leader of LND. His name was Darkwolf
 who I believe was a German guy. As soon as darkwolf took over the group both GZA
and I quit. This was in about early to mid 2002.

Now this is where everything took a total shit if you will excuse my french. With
the addition of Darkwolf came the addition of more and more and more people. I still
hung out in their channel since I knew people in there and liked to talk to people
but I didn't have anything to do with the testing, supplying, or anything to do with
the groups activity. The only problem was, since I had been around that group for
so long, darkwolf decided to leave me on two ftp servers so that if i wanted to
download software I could. "What a nice guy" during that time I believe was when
the FBI was running a site called TMI. This just happened to be one of the sites
that darkwolf put me on. Over the next couple of years I downloaded software titles
anywhere from windows xp to photo shop to music. This whole time I didnt think or
have any idea that I would get myself into trouble for this since I had no
affiliation with the group except for being left on these two ftp servers. When my
house got raided by the FBI I was in total disbelief wondering why they would bother
to raid someone's house that had quit the group over a year and a half ago.

Try to keep in mind that this all happened years ago so allot of it is foggy to me
at best. The last year and a half before my house got raided my conversation with
group members never got any deeper than what my plans were for the weekend or which
girl I was dating at the time. I tried to keep myself away from their business as a
warez group. If I hadn't been so greedy that I felt like I couldn't afford a $400
copy of windows xp I wouldn't be in this mess right now and I can guarantee that
this has cost me allot more up to this point than the software I downloaded for
actual personal use. Sometime before 2001 I did allot of downloading and burning of
cd's "something that people called software collecting" but after a while realized
that I just had it sitting around in boxes and never actually used it. I would
download various cad systems in case I ever decided to make a job change so I could
have the software available for learning. I would also download and try out
software that other people with the same occupation would recommend as good software
and my company has even bought some of this software due to my recommendation after
trying it out. They used to be licensed for Cimatron/gibbs only . Now they added
licenses for Mastercam, Solidworks, and Predator DNC. Titles which the would have
never even considered before. Ive never once sold software to anyone nor used to to
make a profit in any way which I doubt will make a difference at this point.

If you have any questions feel free to ask or if you read through this and think
there might be more information you need let me know. I'll answer any questions you
have. Im not sure how much information should be volunteered to the FBI at this
point as they seem to want to start charging me with things that happened years ago
all of the suddon and I think the statue of limitations is 5 years. All I can say,
is for something that started out innocent enough has really turned into crap. My
last lawyer from Auburn said that his kids are even downloading music and software
off of Kazaa and that until my case, had no idea it was a serious violation.